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**From:** Sullivan, Jacob J <SullivanJJ@state.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 14, 2012 1:23 AM  
**To:** H  
**Subject:** Fw: Brzezinski book report

I asked Dan to take a look at Brzezinski's book -- he's done a great job of summing it up.

----- Original Message -----

**From:** Daniel Kurtz-Phelan [redacted]  
**Sent:** Monday, February 13, 2012 11:42 PM  
**To:** Sullivan, Jacob J  
**Cc:** Kurtz-Phelan, Daniel  
**Subject:** Brzezinski book report

I skimmed the new Brzezinski book, *Strategic Vision*. His overall assessment of the past couple of decades of U.S. foreign policy is harsh, but the brunt of it falls on the Bushies and would resonate with many in this administration – in essence, we've focused too much power and energy on misguided "imperial wars" in the greater Middle East and done a pathetic job of addressing our domestic problems.

This graf pretty much summarizes the book's argument, such as it is:

"America's central challenge and its geopolitically imperative mission over the next several decades is to revitalize itself and to promote a larger and more vital West while simultaneously buttressing a complex balance in the East, so as to accommodate constructively China's rising global status and avert global chaos. ... It must be the promoter and guarantor of greater and broader unity in the West, and it must be the balance and conciliator between the major powers in the East. ... To have the credibility and capacity to pursue both successfully, America needs to show the world that it has the will to renovate itself at home."

And this FA article covers most if it:

<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/136754/zbigniew-brzezinski/balancing-the-east-upgrading-the-west>

There's some interesting material about why we need a strengthened (and broadened) Europe: "America, by working purposefully with Europe, can shape a larger and more vital West. The point of departure for such a long-term effort is recognition of the historical reality that the Europe of today is still unfinished businesses. And it will remain so until the West in a strategically sober and prudent fashion embraces Turkey on more equal terms and engages Russia politically as well as economically. Such an expanded West can help anchor the stability of an evolving Eurasia, as well as revitalize its own historic legacy."

But in the context of the call, I imagine that Brzezinski's warnings about overreach/overinvolvement in Asian power dynamics were the real point. (The book seems to have been finished in early 2011, so there's no explicit criticism of the pivot.) Some seemingly relevant analysis and passages:

- Scathing criticism of U.S. focus on the relationship with India:  
 "America's role in this rivalry should be cautious and detached. ... Given that some policy circles in the United States have started to advocate a formal US-India alliance, it also needs to be stated explicitly that any such undertaking would be contrary to US national security interests. It would increase the likelihood of US involvement in potentially prolonged and bitter Asian conflicts.... It is already earning the United States the hostility of the Chinese by conveying the impression that America sees China as its enemy even before China itself had decided to be America's enemy.

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Moreover, a US-India alliance would be a gratis favor to Russia without any Russian favor in return” and intensify anti-US sentiment among Muslims.

- A weak and chaotic democratizing China should be scarier for us than a strong and only slowly reforming China – since the likelihood of nationalist passions running amok and leaders behaving badly is much higher in the former case than the latter.
- He criticizes as “provocative” air and maritime reconnaissance around China.
- "For America, the task is to disentangle which aspects of China's external ambitions are unacceptable and pose a direct threat to vital American interests and which aspects reflect new historical geopolitical and economic realities that can be accommodated, however reluctantly, without damage to key US interests."
- "But if an anxious America and an overconfident China were to slide into increasing political hostility, it is more likely that both countries would face off in a mutually destructive ideological conflict. America would argue that China's success is based on tyranny and damaging to America's economic well-being. The Chinese would interpret that American message as an attempt to undermine and possibly even to fragment the Chinese system.... It follows that both America and China, out of intelligent self-interest, would be better served by mutual ideological self-restraint. Both should resist the temptation to universalize the distinctive features of their respective socioeconomic systems and to demonize each other."
- "The United States must recognize that stability in Asia can no longer be imposed by a non-Asian power ... Indeed US efforts to enhance Asian stability could prove self-defeating -- propelling the United States into a costly repeat of Asian wars -- and even result in a replay of what transpired in Europe during the twentieth century. If America became active in fashioning an anti-Chinese alliance with India or in promoting an anti-Chinese militarization of Japan, it could generate dangerous mutual resentment."